

Did You Know?

Training Support Center Develops Training Bomb Vests



TSC's Devices Branch Chief Lynn Skinner checks a simulated briefcase bomb that is made to look like the real bombs used by Iraqi insurgents who detonate the bombs using a cell phone. (U.S. Army photos courtesy of Fort Gordon, GA, Public Affairs Office.)

The Iraqi Mine Kit contains 27 simulated projectiles, antipersonnel mines, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades that look like the real weapons commonly found in Iraq.



Calvin Giles works with a mold to produce simulated M-16 rifles, one of the many training devices produced at Fort Gordon.

"We fabricate custom-designed EODs and training-aid items that meet our customers' unique requirements," Skinner explained. "For example, one of our antipersonnel mines may be made of plastic and used for recognition training. However, a Special Forces unit may want to use the same mine to train personnel on metal detection and mine sweeping techniques. Therefore, they want it made of metal and plastic so it will give a metal signature when buried."

The training devices are made according to the characteristics of the actual device or the training purpose. Many of the metal bombs are made with plastic and metal fuse inserts and fins because they are lighter and easier to handle than an actual bomb, which may weigh 50 to 100 pounds. Production methods use Computer Assisted Design and computerized milling and routing. Some devices require poured, injected and rotational plastic production methods. The Training Support Center also has a spray paint booth, cabinet and wood-working shops.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 2004 —A preliminary investigation indicates that the explosion at the U.S. Army dining facility at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq, Dec. 21, 2004, was likely caused by a makeshift bomb worn by a suicide attacker.

Those words, from an American Forces Press Service release, tell the chilling story of a bomb that instantly killed 22 people and wounded many more at an Army mess hall in Iraq late last year. Although investigations into the incident are ongoing, it's assumed that the attacker was wearing the bomb under his clothing.

At the Training Support Center (TSC), Fort Gordon, GA, the Army is working hard to simulate bomb vests, explosive ordnance devices (EODs) and other training devices to teach Soldiers how to spot bombs worn by attackers, as well as improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Lynn Skinner, Chief of the Devices Branch at TSC, said his branch uses real weapon examples to manufacture fake versions of suitcase bombs, bomb vests and antipersonnel mines. Many imitation EODs were developed from actual ordnance brought in from the field.



A simulated briefcase bomb.

TSC has fabricated items for all DOD services, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies. When the USS Cole was sabotaged, the center produced land-installed marine-powered energy transformer mine training devices for Navy SEAL [Sea, Air, Land] teams. The Iraqi Mine Kit was developed for a multinational force in Baghdad in January 2004. Since then, TSC has had numerous requests for that kit.



Machinist James Bates models the fake bomb vest produced by the Training Support Center, Fort Gordon.